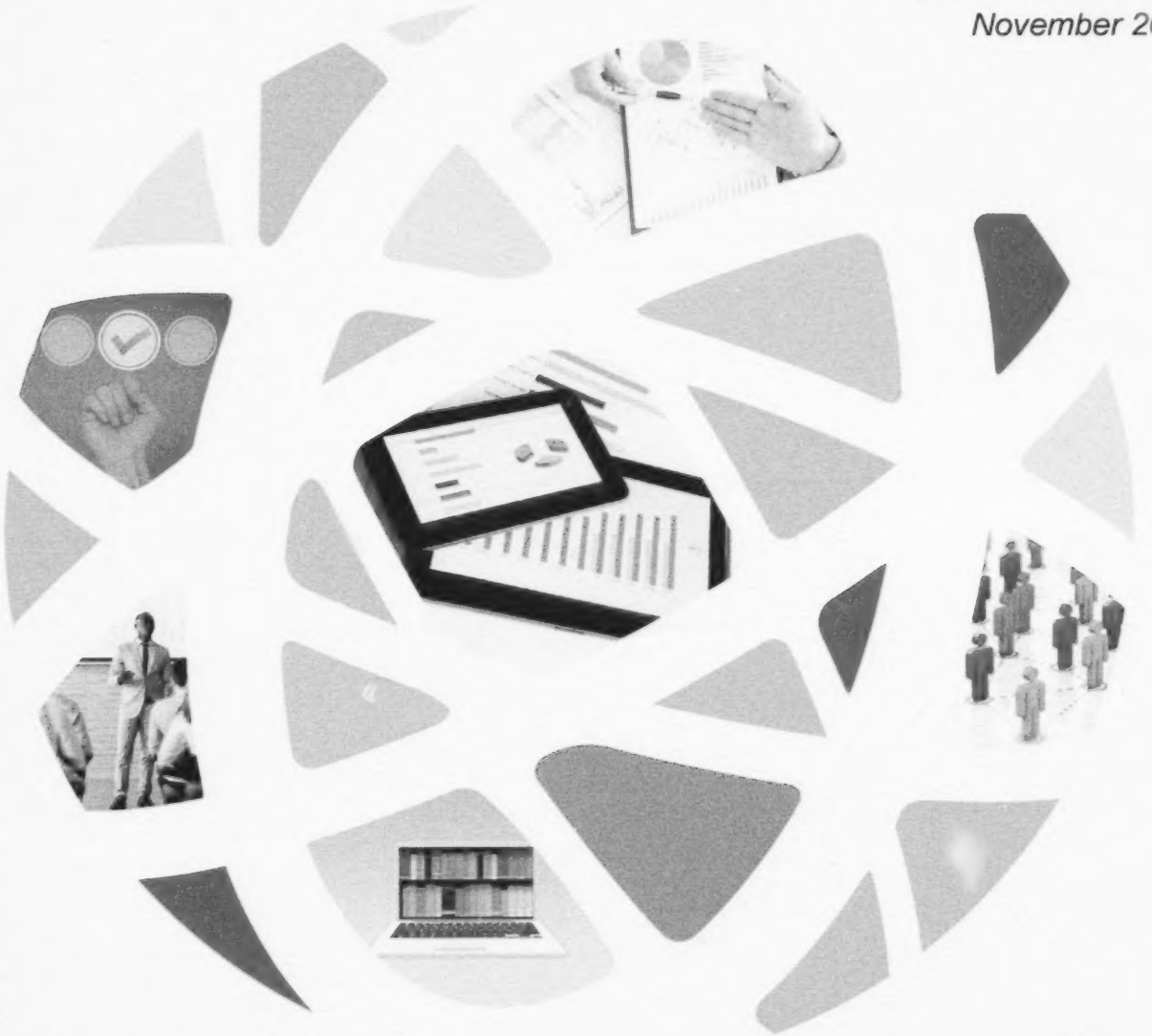
Evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program

Executive Summary

Research and Evaluation

Evaluation Division

November 2017



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada

Technical Appendices are available upon request to Research-Recherche@cic.gc.ca.

Ci4-75/2017E-PDF
978-0-660-24278-1

Reference Number: E1-2015

Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada's (IRCC) Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). The evaluation was conducted in fulfillment of requirements under the 2016 Treasury Board *Policy on Results*, and considered issues of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. The evaluation covered the period from 2010 to 2015.

Overview of the Provincial Nominee Program

The Provincial Nominee Program is a jointly administered immigration program which provides provinces and territories with an opportunity to address their specific economic development needs while distributing the benefits of economic immigration across all provinces and territories. There are currently bilateral agreements with 11 jurisdictions[1] regarding the administration of the PNP which provide the authority for provinces and territories to nominate immigrants destined to their jurisdictions by establishing their own criteria for provincial nomination. Once nominated by a province, a nominee applies to IRCC for permanent residence, at which time the Department determines client's eligibility and admissibility based on IRPR and federal admissibility standards. IRCC retains authority over the final selection decision.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, the main expected outcomes for the program are being met, including outcomes related to economic establishment and the retention of PNs in their nominating PTs, as well as management outcomes. The evaluation found that the vast majority of PN principal applicants have become established economically, with high employment rates and employment earnings that increase over time after admission. Compared to other economic programs, PNs have higher employment earnings than FSWs until the eighth year in Canada, but significantly lower than CEC immigrants. In addition, most PNs surveyed indicated that their first employment in Canada was in a high skilled occupation and three-quarters reported this occupation as commensurate with their skill level or higher.

Although there were some regional differences, a mobility analysis demonstrated that overall, retention[2] was very high, though relatively lower in the Atlantic Provinces. PNP retention rate was comparable to the FSW program and somewhat lower than the CEC and Business class programs.

PNP objectives and roles and responsibilities are well understood by both IRCC and PTs, who have also worked together effectively to improve the alignment of the PT PN programs with the federal economic immigration priorities, and collaborated to increase program integrity.

Some areas for program design improvements have been identified, and as such, this evaluation report proposes two recommendations.

Complementarity of federal economic and PT PN programs: The evaluation found a growing potential for overlap between the PNP and federal economic programs, as they appear to be increasingly attracting and selecting candidates with similar profiles, including skill levels. PT PN programs have evolved to become closely aligned with the federal economic programs with

[1] All provinces and territories except Quebec and Nunavut.
[2] Retention refers to the share of PNs who were still residing in their province of nomination.

greater emphasis on human capital criteria, while the federal programs have evolved to introduce pathways for lower skilled immigrants that used to be exclusive to PT programs.

Contribution to the development of OLMCs: The evaluation found that little progress has been made via the PNP towards enhancing the vitality of francophone minority communities in Canada, with only 1% of PNs admitted under this program over the last six years having been French-speaking. As such, the PNP has provided a limited contribution to meeting the Government of Canada commitment to increase the annual proportion of all Francophone economic immigration outside of Quebec to 4% by 2018.

Information sharing: Several potential areas for improving program design, efficiency and delivery were noted by key informants, most notably in the area of information sharing between IRCC and PTs related to program integrity.

Recommendation 1: In light of the evolving policy and program context at both the PT and federal levels, including the growing role of the Express Entry system, IRCC should review the PNP to examine:

a) The role and expected outcomes of the PNP in relation to other federal economic programs;
b) The OLMC requirements under the PNP; and
c) Information sharing with PTs.

Management of application intake: IRCC has faced challenges in managing the intake of PNP base applications. The higher number of applications compared to PNP allocations under the immigration levels space has led to longer processing times and increased inventories. While IRCC is meeting its service standards for all its Express Entry PNP applications, services standards for base PNP applications are not being met.

Recommendation 2: In collaboration with PTs, IRCC should review its application intake approach and implement measures to ensure timely processing of PNP applications.